

DPH Invites Public Comment on Delaware Statewide Health Assessment

DOVER – The Delaware Division of Public Health (DPH) is seeking input from Delawareans on a draft version of a statewide assessment identifying the primary health needs of First State residents. DPH worked with a broad range of non-profit and medical partners, and community-based and government agencies to create the draft Statewide Health Assessment (SHA) document.

The SHA is an examination of the health of our population. Data gathering for a needs assessment to develop this document began in 2016. The data, pulled from a variety of sources including focus groups, were used to identify local and statewide trends for the identification and prioritization of strategies. The ultimate goal of a SHA is to develop strategies to address critical health needs and identify challenges and assets in the state in a comprehensive way.

All results were compiled and analyzed collectively to paint a collective picture of Delaware's health. This comprehensive process yielded the following four top-level priority areas of focus:

1. Chronic Disease: specifically -heart disease, diabetes, and asthma
2. Maternal and Child Health: specifically – teen pregnancy, premature births, and low birth weight
3. Substance Use/Misuse: specifically -the opioid epidemic, accidental overdose, and smoking/e-cigarette use
4. Mental Health: specifically – mental health diagnoses (especially in youth), suicide/suicidal ideations, and impact of trauma.

The plan is posted at <http://www.dhss.delaware.gov/dhss/dph/files/shna.pdf>. Comments can be submitted at <http://www.dhss.delaware.gov/dhss/dph/files/shaform.pdf>. The deadline for submissions is Tuesday, July 31, 2018.

Residents are encouraged to provide feedback about the information presented in the draft SHA. After receiving public comments, DPH will organize partners again to develop strategies and goals to address Delaware's major health needs.

"It's important to hear from residents about our draft plan for the health and well-being of Delawareans," said DPH Associate Deputy Director, Cassandra Codes-Johnson. "We want to know what's important to you. All residents should have the opportunity to provide input on the issues that are closest to their hearts."

A person who is deaf, hard-of-hearing, deaf-blind or speech-disabled can call the DPH phone number above by using TTY services. Dial 7-1-1 or 800-232-5460 to type your conversation to a relay operator, who reads your conversation to a hearing person at DPH. The relay operator types the hearing person's spoken words back to the TTY user. To learn more about TTY availability in Delaware, visit <http://delawarerelay.com>.

Delaware Health and Social Services is committed to improving the quality of the lives of Delaware's citizens by promoting health and well-being, fostering self-sufficiency, and protecting vulnerable populations. DPH, a division of DHSS, urges Delawareans to make healthier choices with the 5-2-1 Almost None campaign: eat 5 or more fruits and vegetables each day, have no more than 2 hours of recreational screen time each day (includes TV, computer, gaming), get 1 or more hours of physical activity each day, and drink almost no sugary beverages.